

The Taupo County herds on the Kaimanawa, Kaweka, and Ahimanawa Ranges were opened on a license that allowed the taking of two red-deer stags and two Japanese bucks. These Japanese deer (*Cervus Sika*) are the progeny of some six animals liberated on Taharua Station in 1905 by this Department, and were presented to the New Zealand Government by the Duke of Bedford, England. To show how these animals have successfully acclimatized and improved on the original stock, it is recorded that last season Messrs. Dunningham and Jordan, of Auckland, obtained seven heads, one of which is ranked as the world's best for length, spread, and weight of any Japanese buck heads recorded as being got in any part of the world. This Taupo herd area is now looked on as the future stalkers' paradise, for, besides the red and Japanese, there are now sufficient Columbia Black-tail deer (*Dorcelaphus Columbiana*) to warrant their being opened next season. These Black-tails were also liberated in 1905 on the Ahimanawa Range, near Tarawera, and then comprised five animals, purchased in America by Mr. T. E. Donne. They, like the Japanese, are very elusive, and more than ordinary practice in "timber-creeping" is essential to secure either species. Further along on the Kaimanawa Range is a small herd of the beautiful spotted deer (*Cervus Axis*) or Chitral, from some five stock animals purchased in England by this Department, and liberated in 1907 near Mount Tongariro. Those seen in recent years were in splendid condition, and when a further survey has been made of their numbers it is possible they will be opened for shooting under license.

The Tokaanu red-deer herd is a new one that has only been prospected for inspection and report. Mr. R. Levin stated that the number of mature stags was small, but the heads showed promise of being equal to anything in the Dominion. This season six licenses were issued to take two stags, and several splendid fourteen-pointers were taken in the opening week. Mr. G. Wratten, of Cambridge, and Mr. S. Gillies, of Tokaanu, also secured very fine trophies.

The Mahia herd, mainly in private property, has been very heavily culled again by Messrs. Ormond, who own half the peninsula, and who are endeavouring to bring this herd up to a better standard. They intend to give the Warnham Park stags, liberated several years ago by this Department, a chance to make their impression on the herd, and thus eliminate the thin, light, narrow, malformed type of heads produced from the original Nelson deer which formerly comprised this herd. Good stags are scarce this year, and only ten licenses were available for this herd, which was opened on the 1st March, and closed on the 31st March. No report of the heads taken is yet to hand.

The Waikaremoana herd, owing to the excessive shooting of the last three or four seasons, is now below standard on the area open to shooting. Next year it will be necessary to either limit the number of deer which can be shot, or to throw open a further portion of the present sanctuary area to allow the stalkers to have some fresh ground. There have been some very fine deer on the Te Puna Block, between the Waiharuru Stream and the Hopuruahine River, for several years past, and to give more deer-stalkers the opportunity next year to obtain two heads each it is probable that a limit of two heads only will be allowed, and the new Hopuruahine-Ruatahuna Road made the boundary of the open area. To enable this to be done a revision of the sanctuary boundary will have to be made. This will still leave an area of good country between the above road and the Waikaremoana-Gisborne Road as the permanent sanctuary for all game. So far no reports are to hand of what heads have been taken since the season opened, but last year's best head was a good fifteen-point stag, killed by Mr. Dudley Ormond, of Wairoa. With the completion of the all-metalled road, and the availability of this Department's fine launch and boats on Lake Waikaremoana, this herd will be more sought after in future years by outside stalkers, who can now get their cars to the hostel in any weather.

*Game-shooting.*—The season for feathered-game shooting opened on the 2nd May, owing to the 1st falling on a Sunday, and was, as in previous years, for a period of two months, with the exception of the Whakatane County, where a close season was asked for by the Whakatane Rod and Gun Club, but ultimately one month's open season for grey duck only was allowed. The weather proved too fine generally for obtaining even moderate bags, the ducks flying high and wild after the first few hours' shooting. The limit of twenty per gun for a day was got only in a few favourite localities, such as Tarawera Swamp, Mount Edgecumbe lagoons, Matata, Thornton, Whakaki lagoons, and the Waiotaka Swamp. At the Orini lagoon, where the wild ducks had been fed, the ranger found three men shooting without a license, and with over the legal limit, at an early hour on the opening morning. These men were afterwards fined in Court for breaches of the regulations. Swans were plentiful on several of the lakes, and fair numbers were shot on Taupo Lake, Loch Invar, Whakaki, Runanga, and other lagoons, and scores of them sought refuge on the sanctuaries after the first few days' shooting. During the godwit-shooting season very good sport was got on the tidal estuaries, mud-flats, and lagoons, but the Eastern Golden Plover and Turnstone were scarce, and knots were in much smaller flocks. It is evident that these migratory birds have found better feeding-grounds this year. Pheasants were more numerous than last season, and where cover and feed were plentiful good sport was obtained. One license-holder shot the limit of ten cock pheasants the first day within eight miles of Rotorua. The Upper Rangitaiki Valley, Kaingaroa Plain, Waikato Valley, Mokai, Oruanui, Waikare Bush, Kaharoa, and Kaituna Valley all yielded their quota to the keen sportsmen who, by means of motor-cars, were able to rapidly cover large areas of shooting-grounds. Except in rare cases, the chronicling of large bags of game is a thing of the past. Sportsmen are very reticent when they discover some obscure locality where game is plentiful, until they have cleaned it out, and only where the cover is plentiful will the birds survive the ever-increasing number of guns annually in pursuit of them. Around Tarawera Swamp, Lower Rangitaiki Valley, and other parts of the Whakatane County, quail and pheasants are plentiful, due partly to the close season for these species last year, and partly to the fact that there had been a favourable breeding season for the wild birds.

*Trout-fishing.*—The trout-fishing at the end of last season improved considerably by reason of a limit of twenty-five fish per rod per day being placed on the catch and a restriction on the hours of